



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

is a marvel. One is not surprised to learn that he set great store on the minutes, "never wasting a few spare minutes from thinking it not worth while to set to work." Mr. Darwin was a born naturalist, having a habit of collecting and classifying natural objects from his earliest boyhood; but in other respects he writes himself down as a rather ordinary boy, with a penchant for shooting game, in which in early manhood he acquired great skill. He remembered having, as a boy, a keen sense of pleasure in mastering subjects which really interested him. The vocation to which he first turned his thoughts was that of a clergyman, and he pursued a course of study at Cambridge University with that end in view.

His appointment as naturalist to the scientific expedition in the ship "Beagle" on her voyage to South America in 1831, diverted his attention from the Church, and was the great turning point in his career. At this time he was a believer in the orthodox creeds. The history of his declension from the faith of the Church forms a brief but very interesting chapter in this work, and is given from his own letters and diary. It appears that he gave up his belief, slowly and unwillingly, but finally avowed himself an agnostic, though confessing that the idea of annihilation was intolerable to him. He rarely discussed this question, however, feeling that the whole subject was beyond the scope of man's intellect, and that every one must judge for himself between "conflicting vague possibilities." In one respect Darwin was very favorably situated, namely, in being possessed of an ample inherited income, which made it possible for him to pursue his favorite tasks without care about finances. He realized also a good profit from his books, part of which he expended in furthering public objects of a scientific character. Professor Huxley contributes an interesting chapter to the first volume, on Darwin's great book, "The Origin of Species," in which he refers to the complete change of view which has taken place in the scientific world with regard to the theory of evolution, and to the misconceptions regarding it which yet prevail in many quarters.

## II.

### DARWINISM AND ETHICS.

PROFESSOR SCHURMAN, of Cornell University, is the author of an interesting treatise on "Darwinism and Ethics,"\* which discusses the scientific as opposed to the speculative method as applied to ethical problems. The prevalent idea of the book appears to us to be embodied in the following sentence, from the first chapter: "If ethics, instead of groping through the void, impalpable inane of fictitious pre-human morality, would in good earnest describe historic morality in all its fixed and changing characters, tracing the evolution of moral ideas and institutions from their earliest to their present form, then its scientific character, which is to-day a reproach, would be firmly established, and it could claim to be a science as unimpeachable as any other branch of history." And again: "Given the earliest morality of which we have any written record, to trace from it through progressive stages the morality of to-day: that is the problem, and the only problem, which can fall to a truly *scientific* ethics." The author draws a distinction between ethics as a science and a philosophy, and he deplores the unscientific character of the prevailing ethical systems, which he characterizes as speculative. It is just here that Darwinism seems to come in. Darwin, according to our author, is the father of evolutionary ethics, but his work is incomplete; first, because he uses the historical method in morals more as a means of confirming a

\* "The Ethical Import of Darwinism." By Jacob Gould Schurman, Sage Professor of Philosophy in Cornell University. Charles Scribner's Sons.

biological hypothesis than as an independent instrument of investigation, and secondly, because he does not keep it free from the spirit of speculative utilitarianism. Assuming the correctness of Darwin's scientific position, this treatise examines its bearing upon morals, distinguishing between fact and speculation in Darwin's own moral theory. Where Darwinism breaks down in its application of evolution to ethics is in the failure to account for the human conscience. He finds no conscience in the animal, and therefore the conscience of man cannot be a development from the conscience of the lower animal. Instead of resting here or groping for more facts he turns to speculation, and takes sociability on the one hand, which is common to man and beast, and on the other high intelligence, which is peculiar to man, and gets from the combination a primitive conscience. Professor Schurman entertains a great admiration for Darwin as a scientist, and shows a very close acquaintance with his system, but on this point he claims that Darwin is inconsistent with himself, though entitled to gratitude for directing attention to the great question of the evolution of morals as distinct from empirical morality. If ethics is ever to become a science in the true sense of the term, he thinks we must bring ourselves back to this point of departure, shun speculation, and follow the historical method. This, he argues, will in time bring us a rich harvest of facts, which will throw light on many vexed questions.

There is one point on which we cannot quite follow our author's reasoning. We do not see how all the facts in the world gleaned from an investigation of the history of morals can enlighten us as to the origin of the moral sense. A very interesting collection of facts may be tabled for the use of philosophers, but what has all that to do with the origin of the moral sense? If the moral sense is simply an evolution from a physical basis, there is a missing link in the Darwinian system, which our author very clearly points out, but we find no suggestion as to where this link is to be discovered, and no suggestion of an alternative. It may, for instance, be very interesting to learn, with our author, how certain remote savage tribes regarded the question of chastity, and to trace the growth of the law of moral purity as a personal obligation, but the question as to the nature and origin of our moral perceptions is not thereby settled. On the other hand, if we cannot settle this question in a scientific way, there remains the alternative of a creative fiat, but that would be breaking the chain of the evolution hypothesis. Unfortunately, the limits within which our inquiries as to the development of the moral sense in man can range are too restricted for either proving or disproving the Scriptural account by scientific observation. If primeval man was made "upright" and lapsed into barbarism and immorality, the condition in which the dawn of history finds the savage races would be only what might be expected; but all our researches cannot carry us over the prehistoric period to the birth of the moral sense in man. Until evolution can give us a scientific explanation of the existence of conscience, we cannot look to it as a guide in determining the graver questions of ethical science.

### III.

#### BEGINNINGS OF THE STRIFE.

GENERAL CRAWFORD'S "*Genesis of the Civil War*"\* is a work that must produce a deep impression upon American readers. It is in many respects the most important and interesting war book which has seen the light. Never before has there been an attempt to set forth the full history of those political events and discords

\* "*The Genesis of the Civil War. The Story of Sumter, 1860-1861.*" By Samuel Wylie Crawford, Brevet Major-General, U. S. A. Charles L. Webster & Co.